

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 231727Z JAN 78
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1018

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAVANA 0202

EXDIS

DEPT PASS COMMANDANT, COAST GUARD, WASHDC -- PRIORITY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PINS, SNAR, CU, US
SUBJECT: COAST GUARD EXCHANGE

REF: (A) HAVANA 0173, (B) HAVANA 0177

1. SUMMARY: TALKS BETWEEN U.S. COAST GUARD (USCG) AND CUBAN BORDER GUARD TROOPS TOOK PLACE IN FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE, WITH CUBANS EXPRESSING WILLINGNESS TO WORK TOWARD IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS AND POSSIBLE COOPERATION WITH USCG ONSearch AND RESCUE ACTIVITIES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. BOTH SIDES INDICATED HIGH INTEREST IN POSSIBLE DRUG ENFORCEMENT COORDINATION. CUBANS' APPARENT PRINCIPAL PURPOSE IN MEETING WAS TO SECURE APPEARANCE OR REALITY OF USCG COOPERATION IN SUPPRESSION OF ANTI-CASTRO TERRORIST ACTIVITIES. USCG DEL INDICATED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON, AND POSSIBLE COORDINATION OF ACTIVITIES AGAINST, "ACTS OF CRIMINAL VIOLENCE WHICH ENDANGER MARITIME NAVIGATION". CUBANS APPEARED TO ASSESS MEETING AS POSITIVE STEP IN U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY

2. TEN MEMBER USCG DELEGATION (INCLUDING FOUR REPRESENTATIVES OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE AND USINT HAVANA) MET JANUARY 16 THROUGH 19 IN HAVANA WITH SEVEN MEMBER DELEGATION
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OF CUBAN BORDER GUARD TROOPS (INCLUDING TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF MINISTRY OF FOREIGN RELATIONS--SEE HAVANA 43 FOR CUBAN DELEGATION). DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS TO FACILITATE RESPECTIVE SEARCH AND RESCUE AND LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES.

3. DURING FDKS, COAST GUARD AND BORDER GUARDS OUTLINED

THEIR RESPECTIVE ORGANIZATIONS FOR SEARCH AND RESCUE (SAR) AND LAW ENFORCEMENT. CUBANS SAID BORDER GUARD NAVAL ARM IS DIVIDED INTO THREE DISTRICTS--WEST, CENTRAL, EAST-- WITH TWO TO THREE LARGE PATROL BOATS IN EACH. WITH REGARD TO SAR, BORDER GUARD SAID THEY PROVIDE FIRST INSTANCE ASSISTANCE WITH ANOTHER PARALLEL RESCUE AGENCY FOLLOWING UP. ANY AIRCRAFT ASSISTANCE REQUIRED MUST BE OBTAINED FROM CUBAN AIR FORCE. CUBANS EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS TO CONSIDER PROVIDING SEARCH AND RESCUE ASSISTANCE TO USCG IF REQUEST AND INFORMATION RAPIDLY PROVIDED AND RESOURCES, CONSIDERING NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIREMENTS, PERMIT. COAST GUARD RECIPROCATED ASSURANCE OF POSSIBLE SAR COOPERATION.

4. USCG DEL PROVIDED CUBANS WITH PRESENTATION ON COAST GUARD NATIONAL AND DISTRICT ORGANIZATION, INCLUDING COPY OF U.S. NATIONAL SAR MANUAL AND INFORMATION ON AMVER PROGRAM (USE OF VOLUNTARY SHIPS IN SAR). CUBANS WERE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN AMVER PROGRAM AS WELL AS TO PROPOSE CANDIDATE FOR ANNUAL USCG SAR COURSE FOR FOREIGNERS AT GOVERNORS ISLAND. CUBANS SAID THEY WOULD STUDY COAST GUARD INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS.

5. AFTER INITIAL HEDGING AND MILD PRODDING BY USCG DEL, CUBANS AGREED TO DRAFT A PLAN FOR COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATIONS WITH USCG FOR SAR AND OTHER PURPOSES WHICH COULD INCLUDE USE OF COASTAL RADIO NET (CLT), AFTN AIR TRAFFIC

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NET, COMMERCIAL TELEX, AND POSSIBLE PURCHASE OF COMPATIBLE RADIO EQUIPMENT. CUBAN PLAN, WHICH WILL BE SUBMITTED TO USCG THROUGH USINT, WILL APPARENTLY SUGGEST CUBAN REGIONAL, AS WELL AS CENTRAL, POINTS OF CONTACT. COAST GUARD AGREED TO PROVIDE RESPONSE TO CUBAN PLAN. IN INTERIM PERIOD BEFORE PLAN DEVELOPED, EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE HANDLED THROUGH AFTN OR THROUGH INTERESTS SECTIONS FOR LESS URGENT CASES.

6. USCG DEL ALSO RAISED POSSIBILITY OF USING ESTABLISHED AIR CORRIDORS OVER CUBA FOR SAR OPERATIONS SOUTH OF ISLAND. BORDER GUARDS SAID THEY WOULD STUDY ISSUE WITH COMPETENT CUBAN AUTHORITIES.

7. TURNING TO LAW ENFORCEMENT, USCG DEL RAISED PROBLEM POSED BY PERIODIC CUBAN DETENTIONS AND PURSUITS OF U.S. BOATS. IN THIS CONTEXT, PROBLEM OF CONSULAR ACCESS TO DETAINED AMCITS WAS ALSO RAISED. CUBANS CLAIMED THAT THEY WERE VICTIMS OF HOSTILE "PROPAGANDA" SINCE BOATS OFTEN FLED FROM THEM WHEN THEY WERE ONLY SEEKING TO PROVIDE NAVIGATIONAL ASSISTANCE. ON THIS ISSUE, COAST GUARD OFFERED TO PUBLISH NOTICE TO MARINERS DESCRIBING

APPEARANCE OF CUBAN PATROL BOATS AND PROCEDURES, IF
BORDER GUARDS PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION. CUBANS WELCOMED
THIS IDEA. REGARDING DETENTIONS OF US BOATS, CUBANS STRESSED
THEIR NEED TO EXERCISE GREAT CAUTION (PRESUMABLY IN EXAMINING
BOATS AND PASSENGERS) DUE TO "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY" ACTIVITY
AGAINST THEM AS WELL AS USE OF THEIR WATERS BY NARCOTICS
TRAFFICKERS. THIS NEED FOR CAUTION, CUBANS SAID, SOMETIMES LED
TO DELAY IN VESSEL RELEASE OR IN NOTIFICATION OF DETENTIONS.
CUBANS ASSURED USCG DEL, HOWEVER, THAT THEY RECOGNIZE NEED FOR
NOTIFICATION OF DETENTION AND FOR CONSULAR ACCESS. BUT CUBANS
MADE NO SPECIFIC TIME COMMITMENT FOR THIS NOTIFICATION OR
ACCESS. FYI CUBANS HEATEDLY DENIED THAT ASSURANCE OF CONSULAR
ACCESS CONSTITUTED COMMITMENT TO ALLOW USINT TO SEE AMCIT
PRISONERS NOT YET VISITED HERE. END FYI.
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8. CUBANS' PRINCIPAL THEME IN TALKS, TO WHICH THEY REPEATEDLY
RETURNED, WAS ISSUE OF CUBAN EXILE TERRORISM. THEY SAID THAT
EXILES'S ACTIVITY MAY NOW BE AIMED AT U.S. MARINERS AND TOURISTS
COMING TO CUBA (BORDER GUARDS CITED NEED TO PAN FOR PROTECTION
OF MARATHON YACHT CLUB IN THEIR UPCOMING CRUISE TO VARADERO).
CUBANS SAID THAT BORDER GUARD-COAST GUARD TALKS WOULD NOT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HAVANA 0202

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO COMMANDANT COAST GUARD WASHDC PRIORITY

PLEASE EXILES. THEY CHARACTERIZED EXILE "COUNTER-

REVOLUTIONARIES" AS SOURCE OF DANGER FOR US AND AS "YOUR ENEMIES AS WELL AS OURS". CUBANS INDICATED THEIR DESIRE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION WITH US ON EXILE TERRORISTS AND TO OPERATE AGAINST THEM". CUBANS ALSO ASKED WHETHER COAST GUARD WOULD OPERATE "IN CONJUNCTION" WITH CUBANS AGAINST A SUSPECTED TERRORIST GROUP IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. CUBANS ALSO ASKED WHETHER USCG WOULD PROTECT CUBAN FISHING AND MERCHANT SHIPS. USCG DEL SAID THAT COAST GUARD WOULD ENFORCE US LAW AND CARRY OUT ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROTECT MARITIME NAVIGATION AND THAT, IN THIS PROCESS, "COORDINATION" OF US AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES WAS CONCEIVABLE. REGARDING MARATHON YACHT CLUB, COAST GUARD DEL SAID THAT IT WOULD PROVIDE PROTECTIVE ASSISTANCE IF NECESSARY AND RELAY ANY INFORMATION ON ANY TERRORIST THREATS TO CUBANS.

9. ON BROAD QUESTION OF TERRORIST INFORMATION EXCHANGE, USCG DEL INDICATED THAT US PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO CUBANS ON LAST SUMMER'S CAYO PAREDON GRANDE INCIDENT DID NOT REPRESENT ON-TIME GESTURE, BUT RATHER CONTINUING POLICY TO INFORM CUBANS OF POSSIBLE TERRORIST ACTIONS AGAINST CUBA OF WHICH WE BECAME AWARE. CUBANS CHARACTERIZED THIS ASSURANCE, AND COAST GUARD STATEMENTS ON MARITIME

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PROTECTION, AS VERY WELCOME, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF WHAT THEY ERRONEOUSLY THOUGHT TO BE ACQUITTAL ON ALL CHARGES BY US JUDGE OF EXILES INVOLVED IN CAYO PAREDON GRANDE ATTEMPT.

10. TURNING TO NARCOTICS, CUBANS SAID THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND TO ASSIST IN INTERDICTION OPERATIONS AGAINST TRAFFICKERS. SPECIFICALLY, WHEN COAST GUARD IS PATROLLING IN YUCATAN AND WINDWARD PASSAGES, CUBANS SAID THEY COULD INTENSIFY THEIR PATROLS WITHIN TERRITORIAL WATERS TO INTERCEPT BOATS SEEKING TO EVADE USCG. CUBANS ADDED THAT THEY WERE ALREADY PURSUING THIS TACTIC INFORMALLY AND, AS A RESULT, HAD SEIZED 533 THOUSAND POUNDS OF MARIJUANA. CUBANS TOOK PAINS TO POINT OUT THAT THEY DID NOT WISH TO ABIDE NARCOTICS TRAFFIC THAT COULD HURT "PEOPLE" OF UNITED STATES. THEY ADDED THAT, FROM THEIR POINT OF VIEW, THOUGH DRUGS WERE NOT A CUBAN DOMESTIC PROBLEM, THEY FELT THAT THERE WAS BOTH DIRECT AND INDIRECT CONNECTIONS BETWEEN NARCOTICS TRAFFICKERS AND CUBAN EXILE "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES". CHAIRMAN OF BORDER GUARD DEL SAID THAT CUBAN EXPATRIATES (APATRIOTAS) SHARED "SAME CONCEPTS OF WORLD" WITH DRUG TRAFFICKERS, MAFIA, AND WATERGATE BURGLARS. BECAUSE OF THIS ALLEGED CIRCULATION IN SAME CRIMINAL "MICROWORLD", CUBANS SAID DRUG TRAFFICKERS ARE USEFUL SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON "COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES".

11. ON FISHERIES, USCG DEL BRIEFED CUBANS ON US FISHERY ENFORCE-

MENT PRACTICES AND SANCTIONS. IT WAS POINTED OUT THAT FOREIGN VESSELS ARE ONLY BOARDED AND INSPECTED WHEN THEIR FISHING GEAR IS RIGGED OR DEPLOYED. THEREFORE, CUBAN VESSELS, IN TRANSIT TO AND FROM CANADIAN WATERS, WOULD NOT BE INSPECTED. CUBANS EXPRESSED THANKS FOR BRIEFING AND SAID THEY WOULD BE FORWARDING PROPOSAL TO USINT REGARDING POSSIBLE USE OF SPECIFIED CORRIDORS
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FOR NAVIGATION BY CUBAN FISHING BOATS NEAR US. CUBANS DID NOT CLARIFY PURPOSE OF PROPOSAL, SIMPLY SAYING THAT THEY WANTED USCG TO BE AWARE OF LOCATION OF THEIR BOATS. THEY DENIED THAT SAFETY OR SECURITY OF BOATS WAS PRIME CONSIDERATION.

12. BEGIN COMMENT: COAST GUARD-BORDER GUARD TALKS WERE USEFUL IN SETTING UP FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING COOPERATION BETWEEN TWO SERVICES. IN ADDITION, BORDER GUARD DEL CHIEF POINTED TO SIGNIFICANCE OF TALKS, FROM CUBAN POINT OF VIEW, AS POLITICAL INDICATION OF "NEW STAGE" IN U.S.-CUBAN RELATIONS--A REFERENCE TO HAVANA'S FOCUS ON VIRTUES OF US-CUBAN ANTI-TERRORIST COLLABORATION.

13. AS REFLECTED IN REPEATED CUBAN STATEMENTS ON "COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES", AND "EXPATRIATES"--TERMS WHICH DELIBERATELY OBSCURE DISTINCTION BETWEEN VIOLENT AND NON-VIOLENT OPPONENTS OF REGIME, HAVANA WISHES TO GIVE EXILES (AND ANY DOMESTIC ANTI-REGIME ELEMENTS) THE SENSE THAT USG IS ILL-DISPOSED TOWARD, AND IS WORKING WITH CUBAN GOVERNMENT AGAINST, ANTI-CASTRO GROUPS. THIS HAS VIRTUE OF MAKING BORDER GUARD-COAST GUARD TALKS INTO FAVORABLE GESTURE IN NORMALIZATION PROCESS WITH CASTRO GOVERNMENT, BUT RUNS RISK OF APPEARING TO WRITE OFF LEGITIMATE EXILE ASPIRATIONS AND TO GIVE CUBANS BLANK CHECK IN OPERATIONS AGAINST INDIVIDUALS, SAY, TO SEEK TO FLEE FROM CUBA. SUCH MISTAKEN SIGNALS COULD COMPLICATE NORMALIZATION PROCESS.

14. BECAUSE OF RISK OF MISPERCEPTIONS, IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT EXTENT OF USCG COMMITMENT TO JOINT ACTION WITH CUBANS BE PRECISELY LIMITED AND DEFINED--AN OBJECTIVE WHICH WAS ACHIEVED IN FIRST SESSION OF TALKS.

15. CONTINUATION OF USCG-BORDER GUARD DIALOGUE, POSSIBLE IN FUTURE WASHINGTON MEETING, CONCEIVABLY COULD LEAD TO ESTABLISHMENT OF CONCRETE COMMUNICATIONS PROCEDURES
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IN SAR AND LAW ENFORCEMENT FIELD, AS WELL AS WORK OUT
PROCEDURES MINIMIZING DETENTION OF US PLEASURE BOATS AND
IMPROVING CUBAN NOTIFICATION AND CONSULAR
ACCESS PRACTICE. CUBANS PRESUMABLY WILL ALSO BE INTERESTED
IN HIGHLIGHTING ANTI-TERRORIST COLLABORATION--AND EFFORT THAT
CAN PROBABLY AGAIN BE CONTAINED WITH ACCEPTABLE BOUNDS BY
USCG DEL.

16. IN INTERIM, BEFORE QUESTION OF FUTURE MEETING IS
DISCUSSED, USCG SHOULD PROBABLY AWAIT EXAMINATION OF COMMUNICA-
TIONS PLAN AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE DESCRIPTION PROMISED BY
CUBANS, AS WELL AS TO EVALUATE INCIPIENT EXCHANGES OF
INFORMATION, NOTIFICATIONS, AND COOPERATION OF SAR, NARCOTICS,
AND BOAT DETENTION CASES. END COMMENT.

17. THIS MESSAGE HAS NOT BEEN CLEARED BY CHAIRMAN,
USCG DEL. UPON CLEARANCE, EXDIS LIMITATION MAY BE
REMOVED.
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Message Attributes

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